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FRIDAY.....JANUARY, 15, 1904

A MULTITUDE OF COUNSELLORS.

In a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom, says a proverb. In a multitude of counsellors there are many divergent opinions, was proved by yesterday's meeting. From the speeches made one could gather either view. One might be swayed to county government, or one might be led to oppose it. There were able opinions on both sides, and there were also very feeble opinions. The laymen of the community simply were unable to meet the question in its legal aspect. That is the carefully thinking laymen. Of course there are plenty of laymen on every street corner who think they can draft a bill in half an hour, but that is not the style of bill wanted.

Boil the opinions down and you reach this result. To draw a county act which will hold water is a very difficult thing. It will take much time, even with the experience we have to draw such an act, and there would be flaws, which even the greatest care could hardly prevent. The present county act may be legalized in Congress with certain modifications. We have appealed to our supreme authority and it is clear that we should wait till that authority is heard from. To call the legislature together is to entail expense upon the community which it can ill-afford, in point of fact which it cannot afford. The eighteen months appropriation bill does not meet the situation since it does not provide for the running of certain departments of the government. The Organic Act was framed to meet just such an emergency, and we should have the government conducted under this section which allows the governor to fall back upon the old appropriation bill of 1901, and then take time and thought as to the future. That is the argument in a nutshell, and the gist of what the leading minds agreed on.

If this advice is followed we weather a stormy cape in the political history of the Territory. In point of fact it is the only logical method to follow. There is no immediate need of haste. There is need of giving time and thought to the subject. The calling together of a set of representative citizens was a wise move on the part of the governor, because it enabled him to get direct opinions from which there can be no receding. The Attorney General naturally has been called upon for an opinion and that will help the Governor. But the true help of the Governor lies with the people. This is a time when he needs the strongest of support, and the best support that can be given him is not to hasten into great argument, or wild proposals, but to wait and think. This is not a subject for thoughtless or careless action. It is a matter for calm deliberation.

That this present issue would arise was foreseen during the session of the legislature, and the proposal was made to pass an alternative appropriation bill in case the county act might prove to be defective. But the majority would not hear of such a thing. That any one should attack any act passed by those Solons seemed to be impossible to them. There was wisdom in the suggestion at the time as the event has proved. However there was underlying cunning in the members of the legislature. There were those who thought that, if the county act was knocked out the legislature would, of necessity, have to be called together. That would mean more pay, more traveling expenses, more graft, and they were quite foxy enough to see their chance.

The basis upon which the opposition to an alternative bill was made, was that it showed that the Republican party wanted to knife the county bill, and there was no one in the house who had the courage of his opinions and made a stand against an unjust charge. The expression of public opinion yesterday was dead against calling the legislature together until every other means had been tried. Of course after time and thought has been given to the question it may be necessary to call the legislature together, but it will be a last resort.

The present condition of affairs shows how difficult it is to create. We had a system of law in this country which by process of accretion had grown fairly workable. We then undertook to rip it up entirely, and we have failed. You may patch a coat, and make a successful job of it, but you cannot make a new coat out of the remains of an old one. Laws grow from year to year and from decade to decade. It is only experience which can guide us in framing our laws. If any criticism is to be passed upon the county act, that criticism must be that it attempted to do too much. In striving after an ideal, it failed. Its object was the public good. In aiming after that it neglected certain technicalities. But government by counties will come in time, whether citizens wish it or not.

TOBACCO.

Every now and again we have a dissertation upon Cuban tobacco especially and upon all tobacco generally with the advice that we should raise and can raise a like article here. Indeed there are special experiments being made at this present time with a view to introducing the tobacco industry to this Territory.

That we shall be able to raise tobacco there can be very little doubt, that we shall be able to raise tobacco of the quality which has made Cuba famous is quite another thing. As for the tobacco of Cuba, its fame is so great that it needs no description, and its very excellence makes description well-nigh impossible. Suffice it to say that, as all men are aware, Cuban tobacco is the best in the world. What makes it so, no one knows. None of the many learned scientists who have laboriously investigated the matter have been able to discover the secret. What is more, wherever the secret may be hiding—in the soil, in the plant, or in the atmosphere—it seems to be safe in Cuba's possession, for all the numberless efforts to transplant and to reproduce the high-grade Cuban tobacco in other countries with satisfactory results, or to equal its excellence by the most assiduous cultivation of other tobacco, have totally failed.

Curiously, too, this very superior grade of tobacco is produced in only one of the six provinces of Cuba—Pinar del Rio, the most westerly province—and in only one section of that province, namely, the sunny southern slope of its central mountain range. The land of this district stretching along down the slope nearly to the sea for perhaps 15 miles and covering a space of perhaps 500 square miles, is entirely of the Tertiary formation, and is said by the encyclopaedias, rather superfluously, to be "peculiarly well suited for the cultivation of fine tobacco." The district is called, in common parlance, "Vuelta Abajo," and all attempts to equal in the other provinces the excellence of this "Vuelta Abajo" tobacco have proved futile. As in the analogous case of the wines produced from a few small vineyards in the French province of Chamagne, which have a characteristically delicious flavor unattainable by other vintages, so for some inscrutable reason the tobacco raised in the "Vuelta Abajo" of Pinar del Rio remains unapproached and unapproachable in excellence through the centuries.

It is very plain that unless we have some large section of land which is gifted in the peculiar way that Pinar del Rio is gifted we shall never raise anything better than a very ordinary tobacco. But ordinary tobacco can be raised in Connecticut, in Virginia, in North Carolina. This is not what we want. If we go into the tobacco business we want to make a brilliant success of it. It is not the mere growing of the plant that we want to attend to, that is easy. What we want to attend to is the soil and the aspect. That is where the true experiment will come in. Have we soil, climatic condition and aspect which will equal the "Vuelta Abajo" of Cuba? This can not be decided without many

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experiments and very careful study. As an industry tobacco of a high grade is more profitable than sugar. Could we introduce into these islands such a profitable industry we would be doing the islands one of the greatest of benefits. There are many advantages in the tobacco industry. The investment for establishing and carrying on a tobacco plant does not need to be nearly as great as that for a first class sugar plant. But, on the other hand, the cultivation of tobacco is much more difficult than the cultivation of sugar cane, and it is much more liable to injury from bad atmospheric and meteorological conditions and from predatory insects. The risks attending the tobacco industry are therefore greater than those of the sugar industry, but under favorable circumstances the profits are much larger.

War is certain. The Czar has stated that he will do all in his power to preserve peace. That is quite enough.

Kepoikai will find himself quite an important personage when he returns from his vacation on Maui.

The decree in the case of the county act will settle finally the status of the county officers who are still hanging on.

It was a curious thing to have two survivors from the Iroquois theatre passing through Honolulu and serves to show how small the world is. The story told by these survivors accentuates the fact that the accident was very sudden, and further that the fire escapes were unfinished and the building should not have been in use until they were.

The revolutionists in Montevideo seem to be making a success of their little war. Perhaps this portends another republic in South America.

Warships in the Suez Canal must give the officials some anxiety. The ships of opposing nations however are kept far apart. When they get into the Red Sea, they may do what they please, but the canal is a neutral zone.

The amiable Korean is doing a little rioting on his own account before he gets wiped out in the clash between Japan and Russia.

Governor Taft will have an excellent opportunity of seeing and of talking over matters during his stay here. It is a most important thing that he should be well informed about conditions here. He will be able to give us considerable assistance.

The dock question and the wharves were discussed yesterday afternoon. The necessity of having everything solid and as permanent as possible was clearly brought out. It has been one

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of our failings in the past, not only as regards harbor improvements, but as regards public work in general that we have sacrificed permanent solidity to present utility. We have aimed, at times, to do too much.

The offices that went out of existence under the county act are being reorganized, but those who are employed do not know where their salaries will come from. They live in hopes and their hopes are not likely to be disappointed.

Bill White is loathe to give up his pay, perquisites and influence. This is what might be expected from a gentleman of his caliber. On the other hand the Sheriffs of Hawaii and Kauai have accepted the situation without a word.

Kalili camp will soon be a thing of the past. It has been a hot bed of evil for a long time, and the city will be well rid of it. Originally there was a kindly intention in supplying free homes to the indigent, but eventually it became a center of political intrigue, with some other evils thrown in as a make weight.

War risks on vessels, as has been pointed out again and again in these columns, are the clearest indication of what is going on. The commercial world has made up its mind that a state of war exists, now, though no actual clash has taken place.

It is generally the Turk who is charged with committing atrocities upon the Christian inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula. The Bulgarian, however, manages to keep his end up, and succeeds occasionally in killing a few unsuspecting Turks. Thirty Turks were blown up yesterday. Sometime ago Bulgarians wrecked a bank with dynamite and killed and injured the clerks employed. The Bulgarians, Armenians and Macedonians are not always entitled to the effusive sympathy which they get.



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